

Population Characteristics

Series P-20, No.359

**Voting and
Registration
in the
Election of
November
1980**

(Advance Report)

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U.S. Department of Commerce

Philip M. Klutznick, Secretary

Courtenay M. Slater,
Chief Economist

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Vincent P. Barabba,
Director



BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Vincent P. Barabba, Director

Daniel B. Levine, Deputy Director

**George E. Hall, Associate Director
for Demographic Fields**

POPULATION DIVISION

Roger A. Herriot, Chief

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Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1980

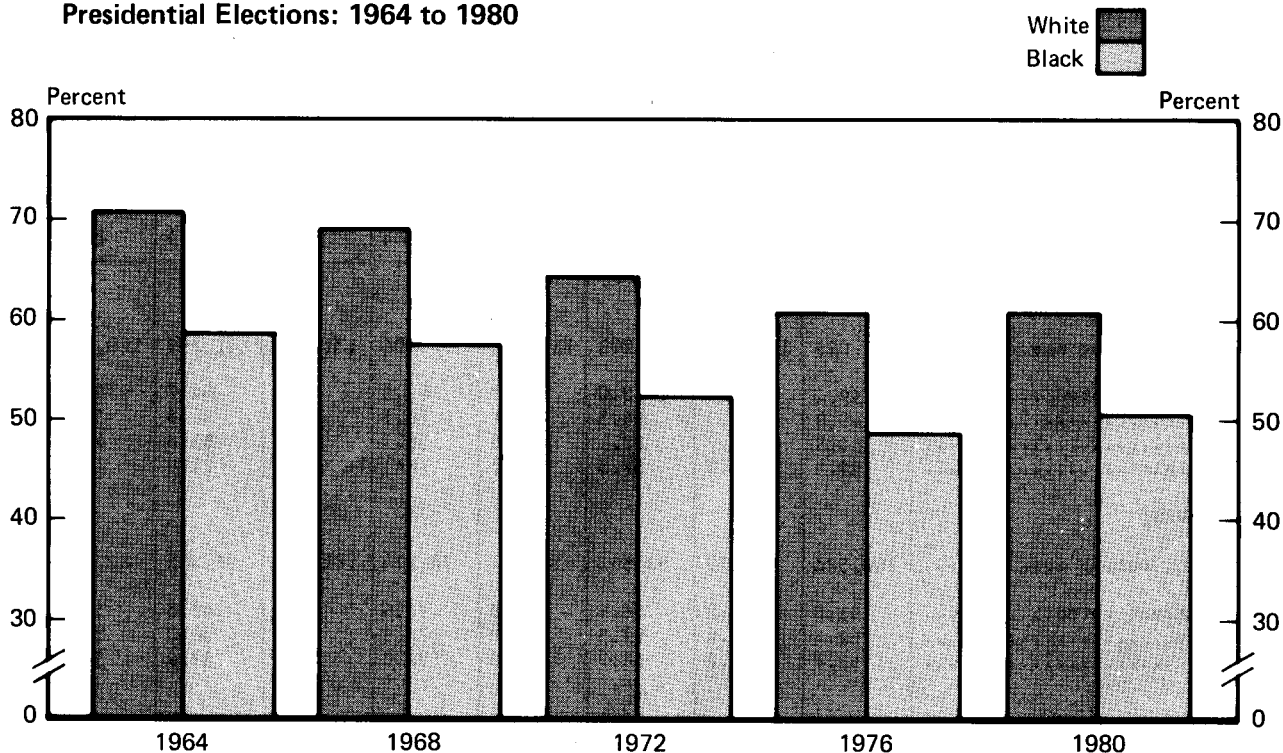
(Advance Report)

This report presents advance statistics on the characteristics of persons who registered and voted in the Presidential election of November 1980. The tables highlight changes in voter turnout for all Presidential and Congressional elections since 1964. Some of the findings in the tables follow:

- The reported voter turnout rate for the November 1980 election was 59 percent, the same as in the 1976 election but lower than that reported in 1964 (69 percent) when the first Current Population Survey on voting and registration was conducted. Similarly, the proportion of the population of voting age who reported being registered to vote in 1980 (67 percent) was the same as in 1976, declining from 1968 when 74 percent of the voting-age population reported being registered to vote. (Registration data were not collected in the 1964 survey.)

- Sixty-one percent of the White population of voting age voted in 1980 compared with only 51 percent of the Black population and 30 percent of the Spanish-origin population. These differences in voter turnout, however, are almost entirely the result of differences in the proportion of the population who were registered to vote; this percentage ranges from a high of 68 percent for the White population to 60 percent for the Black population to only 36 percent for the Spanish-origin population. Among those registered, 89 percent of the White, 84 percent of the Black, and 82 percent of the Spanish-origin population also reported voting in the 1980 election. (The difference between the Black and Spanish-origin populations, however, is not statistically significant.) For the non-Spanish population in the United States, the voter turnout and

Percent of Persons of Voting Age Reported Voting in
Presidential Elections: 1964 to 1980



voter registration rates were 61 and 69 percent, respectively; among those who registered, 89 percent reported voting in the 1980 election.

- The largest decline in voter turnout since 1964 occurred in the North and West where voter participation declined by 12 percentage points for Whites and 19 percentage points for Blacks. In the South, however, relatively smaller changes in voter turnout rates were found between 1964 and 1980. Although there was an increase in the voter turnout rate for Blacks from 44 percent in 1964 to 48 percent in 1980, a decrease for Whites from 60 to 57 percent occurred during that period. Both groups in the South in 1980, however, had lower voter turnout rates than recorded in 1968, the first Presidential election year after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, when the reported voting rates for Blacks and Whites were 52 and 62 percent, respectively.
- No difference in the voter participation levels for men and women was apparent in the 1980 election. In 1964, the reported voting rate for men (72 percent) was about 5 percentage points higher than for women; but, by 1980, both rates fell to 59 percent. Out of the 93 million people who reported voting in the 1980 election, 53 percent were women.

These data are based on answers to a series of questions asked of a sample of persons of voting age in the Current Population Survey 2 weeks after the election of November 4. The questions were designed to provide information on voting behavior of the various segments of the population of voting age. This report presents advance statistics on voting

and registration; more detailed tabulations and analysis will be presented in a forthcoming report.

Official counts of the number of votes cast in the 1980 elections are not yet available. However, press reports on the number of votes cast for President indicated that about 85 million persons, or approximately 53 percent of persons of voting age, voted in the 1980 election. As in previous years, that is lower than the number (and percent) reported by persons in the Current Population Survey.

Despite the difference found in surveys and actual votes cast, the data presented in this report can be regarded as providing useful measures of differences in voting behavior among classes of the population. A discussion of factors which may account for the differences between the Current Population Survey and official counts was published in the report, *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1978*, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 344.

Data presented in this report for States and SMSA's should be interpreted with caution since the surveys prior to 1980 were not designed to produce detailed subnational population estimates.

Since the data in this report are based on a sample of the population, they are also subject to sampling errors. Confidence limits of 95 percent probability were applied to all statements of this report. This means that the chances are at least 19 in 20 that a difference identified in the preceding paragraphs indicates a true difference in the population rather than the random variations arising from the use of a sample. Estimates of the size of the sampling error will be included in the forthcoming detailed report.

Table A. Percent Reported Voting, by Region, Race, and Spanish Origin: November 1964 to 1980

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

Region, race, and Spanish origin	Presidential elections					Congressional elections			
	1980	1976	1972	1968	1964	1978	1974	1970	1966
UNITED STATES									
Total, voting age.....	157,085	146,548	136,203	116,535	110,604	151,646	141,299	120,701	112,800
Percent voted.....	59.2	59.2	63.0	67.8	69.3	45.9	44.7	54.6	55.4
White.....	60.9	60.9	64.5	69.1	70.7	47.3	46.3	56.0	57.0
Black.....	50.5	48.7	52.1	57.6	58.5	37.2	33.8	43.5	41.7
Spanish origin ¹	29.9	31.8	37.5	(NA)	(NA)	23.5	22.9	(NA)	(NA)
NORTH AND WEST									
Total, voting age.....	106,524	99,403	93,653	81,594	78,174	102,894	96,505	83,515	78,355
Percent voted.....	61.0	61.2	66.4	71.0	74.6	48.9	48.8	59.0	60.9
White.....	62.4	62.6	67.5	71.8	74.7	50.0	50.0	59.8	61.7
Black.....	52.8	52.2	56.7	64.8	² 72.0	41.3	37.9	51.4	52.1
SOUTH									
Total, voting age.....	50,561	47,145	42,550	34,941	32,429	48,752	44,794	37,186	34,445
Percent voted.....	55.6	54.9	55.4	60.1	56.7	39.6	36.0	44.7	43.0
White.....	57.4	57.1	57.0	61.9	59.5	41.1	37.4	46.4	45.1
Black.....	48.2	45.7	47.8	51.6	² 44.0	33.5	30.0	36.8	32.9

NA Not available.

¹Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.

²Black and other races in 1964.

Table B. Percent Reported Registered, by Region, Race, and Spanish Origin: November 1966 to 1980

(Civilian noninstitutional population)

Region, race, and Spanish origin	Presidential elections				Congressional elections			
	1980	1976	1972	1968	1978	1974	1970	1966
UNITED STATES								
Total, voting age.....	66.9	66.7	72.3	74.3	62.6	62.2	68.1	70.3
White.....	68.4	68.3	73.4	75.4	63.8	63.5	69.1	71.6
Black.....	60.0	58.5	65.5	66.2	57.1	54.9	60.8	60.2
Spanish origin ¹	36.3	37.8	44.4	(NA)	32.9	34.9	(NA)	(NA)
NORTH AND WEST								
Total, voting age.....	67.9	67.7	73.9	76.5	63.8	63.3	70.0	73.8
White.....	69.3	69.0	74.9	77.2	64.9	64.6	70.8	74.5
Black.....	60.6	60.9	67.0	71.8	58.0	54.2	64.5	68.8
SOUTH								
Total, voting age.....	64.8	64.6	68.7	69.2	60.1	59.8	63.8	62.2
White.....	66.2	66.7	69.8	70.8	61.2	61.0	65.1	64.3
Black.....	59.3	56.4	64.0	61.6	56.2	55.5	57.5	52.9

NA Not available.

¹Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.